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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview and description of the Fitchburg State College (Massachusetts) Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) Program in Professional Staff Development and the subsequent establishment of the Professional Development Center. The purpose of the certificate is to enable veteran master teachers, specialists, and administrative staff to develop competence in the areas of: organizational development; planned change; the design, delivery, management, and evaluation of staff development programs; and action research to address the needs and goals of a school system, thus empowering the system to restructure through the collaborative efforts of all. The 3-year, degreed, 33-credit field-based graduate program is designed in collaboration with the Fitchburg School System. The paper presents the program goals, academic plan of study, and relevant data regarding the projects. The Center, through the leadership of the Advisory Board, offers support to the goals of area school systems. Workshops, professional seminars, long-term networks, and consultation services enhance the quality of educational services and create a dynamic, mutually rewarding relationship between the college, the community, and the individuals served. (LL)

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A CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED GRADUATE STUDY IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A FIELD-BASED COLLABORATIVE DEGREE PROGRAM FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE - FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C.
DECEMBER 8, 1992

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ABSTRACT

This document, presented to the National Staff Development Council on December 8, 1992, provides an overview and description of the Fitchburg State College, in Fitchburg, Massachusetts Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) Program in Professional Staff Development and the subsequent establishment of the Professional Development Center. Herein are presented the program goals, academic plan of study, and relevant data regarding the projects. The Center through the leadership of the Advisory Board offers support to the goals of area school systems. Workshops, professional seminars, long-term networks, and consultation services enhance the quality of educational services and create a dynamic, mutually rewarding relationship between the college, community and the individuals we serve.

PURPOSE, DESCRIPTION, MANAGEMENT PLAN OF THE CAGS

Purpose

The purpose of the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study program in Professional Development in Public Schools is to enable veteran master teachers, specialists and administrative staff to develop competence in the areas of: organizational development; planned change; the design, delivery, management and evaluation of staff development programs; and action research to address the needs and goals of a school system, thus empowering a system to restructure through the collaborative efforts of all.

Program Description

This three-year, thirty-three credit graduate program is designed in collaboration with a given school system. CAGS candidates, all from the given system, undertake a formal study related to the school system's prioritized goals, implement staff development programs related to the system's needs, and undertake research related to the system's goals. The Lunenburg, Massachusetts School System participated in the three-year program from 1987-1990. The Fitchburg, Massachusetts School System is in the third year of the CAGS program.

In the first phase, which takes place during the spring prior to commencing the three-year field-based program, the plan is to collaboratively identify four or five specific system wide goals and then, to design a six-credit course to address these goals. In the second phase during the first year, a team-taught six-credit course, PDEV 9000 -Effective Instructional Processes: Theory to Practice is designed and implemented to meet goals of the school system. In this course participants study the theory and current research related to the goals, experience adult learning methodologies and work in K-12 teams to address course requirements. Peer coaching is used to facilitate the practice and mastery of newly acquired skills as they are implemented in the classroom or appropriate setting. In this phase the graduate students and the course instructor begin to plan an in-service program on the targeted goals for school system staff. During the spring/summer students study Dynamics of Planned Change, a three-credit course EDLM 9100.

During the second year, graduate students take PDEV 9200, Professional Development Programs: Design, Management and Evaluation which includes a pre-practicum in staff development. In this course students study theory related to program design and management as well as direct a staff development program as a member of a team with four or five colleagues. Following this combined academic study and group practicum experience, students formally study approaches to research in Research Seminar in Education, DEV 9300. It is during this course that CAGS candidates get a working knowledge of educational research. Not only do students demonstrate their ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate educational research, they apply their knowledge by producing a research proposal. The research thesis to be completed in Year III is strongly rooted in the teacher as researcher and the needs of the school system.

In the third year students complete an Internship and Seminar in Professional Staff Development, PDEV 9400. Graduate interns work in teams of two to design, implement and evaluate a minimum twelve-week course for their school system colleagues; and they participate in seminars with fellow interns. CAGS candidates also complete their graduate thesis research and report. These field-based professional development courses are taught by the interns carrying in-service credit, sessions are observed by the graduate faculty supervisor, and Peer Coaching continues to positively impact the intern's instructional skills and style. School-based staff pay a fee of fifty dollars to enroll in these field-based staff courses. Registration funds are used by the interns to cover course materials or any other instructional related costs.

After completing the three-year field-based program or during any portion thereof, master teachers, that is the degree candidates, complete two advanced level graduate courses in their Master's field of study.

This field-based program requires the initial involvement, visibility and on-going support of the school committee, central office staff and building administrators. Without their direct input, involvement and feedback, this program would not be as successful as it might be at effecting systemic change or the restructuring schools to meet the system goals. Administrative involvement is a key component in this program's potential to impact the school system.

A team made up of the cadre of CAGS candidates manages and directs all collaborative activities. Representatives meet with the School Committee to address the program's goals. A report is also presented to the School Committee at the end of each academic year.

The CAGS Plan of Study

Courses:	Suggested Sequence
Effective Instructional Processes: Theory to Practice PD 9000 6 credits	Year I
Dynamics of Planned Change EDLM 9100 3 credits	Summer I
Professional Development Programs: Design Management, and Evaluation (prepractica) PD 9200 6 credits	Year II
Research Seminar in Education PDEV 9300 3 credits	Summer II
Seminar and Internship in Staff Dev. Prog. PDEV 9400 6 credits	Year III
Graduate Thesis PDEV 9500 3 credits	Summer III
Master Field of Study Course (Elective) 6 credits	When desired

Goals of Fitchburg Circle Collaborative, CAGS

1. Development of collegiality among teachers and administrators as well as collaborative relationships with parents and the community;
2. Inclusion of multicultural perspectives in the curriculum and the appreciation of cultural diversity within the classroom;
3. Coordination of K-12 subject area curricula;
4. Development of teachers as educational leaders;
5. Creation of alternatives to mainstream approaches to include cooperative learning,interdisciplinary curricula, the overt teaching of higher order thinking skills, the enhancement of student self-esteem, etc.

Admission Requirements

Candidates are required to have a Master's Degree, five years teaching experience, and meet Fitchburg State College and Fitchburg Public Schools' admission criteria.

Program Cost

Graduate students in the CAGS program are responsible to pay for the courses in which they enroll. Payment is made through the assignment of student teachers vouchers or by the student. The students are supported by system funds to purchase text books and instructional materials needed to implement staff development courses. Grants often fund program components.

Intent To Participate

A system interested in collaborating with the College to develop a CAGS program for that system meets with the CAGS program chair to explore the possibility of developing such a program for their school system.

School System Support

School systems participating in the CAGS graduate program support graduate students in their formal academic study by providing a budget of approximately $2000 per year for the purchase of texts and instructional materials to support staff development programs; facilitate communication among building level administrators, central office staff and teaching staff in the system; support the candidates through participation in scheduled brainstorming/decision making sessions (approximately 2-3 per year); and, award in-service credit for staff development courses offered by the CAGS candidates to K-12 teachers in the school system.

FITCHBURG CAGS TAUGHT STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OFFERINGS
1991-1992

CAGS A TEACHING STUDENTS TO LEARN...COOPERATIVELY (K-12)

Description: A study of cooperative learning essentially aimed at classroom teachers which includes review and analysis of sociological and psychological factors inherent in the successful practice of cooperative learning. Topics such as organizational behavior, inter-group relations, management techniques, thinking skills, and peer coaching will be examined.

This course schedule includes a series of five three-hour sessions mixing lecture, simulation, problem solving and discussion of the major components of the course: cooperative learning structures and techniques, design and implementation, evaluation, peer coaching and thinking skills. The balance of the course is devoted to individual consultation on group projects: i.e., implementation of successful utilization of cooperative learning models into the classroom practices.

Course meetings: Tuesdays
Location: FHS Library
Time: 3 - 6 P.M.

CAGS B WHOLE LEARNING: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM (K-12)

Description: The study of interdisciplinary curriculum - "whole learning" - will provide a knowledge view and curriculum approach that consciously applies methodology and language from more than one discipline to examine central themes, issues, problems, topics or experience.

Objectives: 1) to understand the issues involved in the interdisciplinary concepts, such as appropriate themes, fostering intercollegiality, etc.; 2) to examine successful interdisciplinary models; 3) to design an interdisciplinary project; 4) to implement and evaluate the project.

Course meetings: Tuesdays
Location: McKay A205
Time: 3 -6 P.M.

CAGS C A SURVEY OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS (K-12)

Description: This course is designed to survey prevailing "isms" in our society and their impact on inclusive school environments. Participants will gain comprehensive background knowledge on the topics and issues surrounding inclusive public school programs, practices, and environments. Participants will practice and implement research-based strategies to increase teacher effectiveness.

Objectives: 1) Participants will become aware of prevalent biases and "isms" within themselves and the school community and how these impact student achievement; 2) Participants will acquire skills and strategies enabling them to create a more inclusive classroom and school environment; 3) Participants will practice newly acquired strategies with feedback from peer coaching exercises and observations; 4) Participants will design and implement a curriculum project addressing the issues raised in class.

Course meetings: Tuesdays
Location: Memorial Library
Time: 3.15-5.45 P.M.

FITCHBURG CAGS STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OFFERINGS
1992-1993

CAGS A-1 UNCLES-IN-LAW PROGRAMS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Description: This is a three-credit thirty-hour course dealing with understanding different learning styles, gaining a knowledge of the basics of Chapter 766, developing a series of lessons on integrating Resource Room students into the mainstream classroom, and developing a personal action plan on how to effectively use the Special Needs services available within his/her building. Participants will also hear from guest speakers regarding the changing trends in Special Education and the move back to a generic or resource person model.

Course meetings: Tuesdays
Location: FHS Library
Time: 3-6 P.M.

CAGS B-1 COOPERATIVE DISCIPLINE

Description: The goals of the program provide teachers with a framework for achieving effective, long-lasting discipline in the classroom. As they progress through the COOPERATIVE DISCIPLINE process, teachers will: 1) gain an understanding of the basics of behavior;

2) discover what students are trying to achieve when they misbehave; 3) learn to identify the four goals of misbehavior; 4) learn to tailor discipline strategies to an individual student's needs; 5) learn to apply a variety of interventions to use at the moment a student misbehaves; 6) discover how to reinforce desirable behavior in students; 7) develop ways to build student self-esteem through encouragement strategies; 8) learn to discipline cooperatively by involving others in the discipline process; 9) discuss techniques for involving both students and parents in the COOPERATIVE DISCIPLINE process.

Course Meetings: Tuesdays
Location: McKay Library
Time: 3-6 P.M.

CAGS C-1 COMPUTER USE AND CURRENT TRENDS IN EDUCATION

Description: The purpose of the course is to introduce administrators, teachers and parents to: cooperative learning, multi-culturalism, an interdisciplinary curriculum, critical thinking and peer coaching while providing a computer-based experience.

Course Meetings: Tuesdays
Location: Memorial Library
Time: 3-6 P.M.

CAGS D-1 AYUDA

Description: The course schedule consists of ten 2-hour presentations designed in Spanish and English to address both the Hispanic and Anglo population of Fitchburg.

It is designed primarily for parents of children attending Fitchburg Public Schools and hopes to address some of the current pedagogical methods in use within Fitchburg Public Schools. There is lecture with audience participation along with a consultation time for parents to discuss any issues during presented session.

Course meetings: First Tuesday of each month
Location: South Street School
Time: 6 P.M.

CAGS E-1 COOPERATIVE DISCIPLINE

Description: This is a comprehensive program that helps teachers achieve order and control in today's classroom in a manner that's consistent with optimum student growth - academic, social and psychological. It provides concrete strategies for encouraging teachers, parents, administrators, and students to work as a team in helping students choose appropriate behavior.

Course Meetings: Second Tuesday of each month
Location: Crocker School
Time: 3 P.M.

PROPOSED GRADUATE THESIS RESEARCH TOPICS

1. The effects of ability grouping on student self-esteem.
2. The self-esteem of the resource room child compared to the regular education child in the middle school.
3. The Writing Process and its effect on writing improvement.
4. The effects of the Books and Beyond Reading Incentive Program on student reading achievement.
5. The school's climate, culture, and leadership and the effects on school restructuring issues/change.
6. The effects in violence intervention training in city schools.
7. The impact of athletics and extracurricular activities on academic performance.
8. The impact of new Chpt. 766-Special Education initiatives on school administration and teachers.
9. Assessing the academic effectiveness of Hispanic children in Fitchburg's Bilingual Programs.

INFORMAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT/SUPPORT DATA

CAGS participants have reported numerous changes in their teaching behavior. In keeping with the teacher emphasis upon ownership of their own change, the following teachers reflect selected emphasis on observations and self-improvements

Ms. Kay Alverson-Hillman observed that she feels "more comfortable applying cooperative learning activities and helping students know, understand and value the opinion of others."

Changes in thinking about teaching and the encouragement of teachers to be more thoughtful and inquisitive about what they do are major goals of the CAGS program. Ms. Colleen Schwartz stated that "the program profoundly changed the way I relate to students. I think about what I did well, what wasn't so good and how I can improve upon it."

Bill Bourque reported that "the staff development program is well organized providing participants with meaningful examples of techniques. Group discussions among system wide colleagues foster a positive attitude which many teachers have lost."

William Caron, an administrator from the Central Office staff, stated, "As an administrator I feel this is the most beneficial program to appear in the system in a long time. I believe it will help motive established faculty through the cooperative learning and critical thinking aspects."

Paula Giaquinto, Assistant Principal at South Street Elementary, cited, "A sampling of contemporary issues in the school reform initiative provides information and insights in our efforts to improve local education. Peer coaching/ collegial interaction within the reform movement has provided the most concrete, initial cohesive element within the CAGS program to date. Readings of the most current research, most successful examples and even a few problems reinforce that we are not alone in our efforts."

Michael Hurd, Assistant Principal at Fitchburg High School, said, "I am acquiring the knowledge/requisite skills to facilitate the necessary growth of the professional staff in the Fitchburg Public Schools. I believe that the paced, structured, incremental approach to the process of change is indeed correct. The variety of strands being presented should be more than ample to satisfy the various needs/requirements of all participating staff."

Inviting input and ownership of design and implementation from the very beginning i.e. ground-up involvement, is crucial to commitment and a sense of ownership in the program.

Ms. Bonnie-Baer-Simahk cited that the PDC networks have created a sense of community and that problems and issues are no longer addressed in isolation. Another teacher stated that "I am the only one in my school who is using Whole Language in the classroom and I am grateful that I can come together with others who have the same interests. It helps to break down teacher isolation and increase teacher sharing." The Networks serve as a support system of teachers assisting teachers.

Mr. John Mara, an assistant principal, noted the sense of professional esteem that teachers derive from emphasis on teacher control and latitude. He further stated that teachers appreciate the opportunity to inquire into and experiment with their teaching. He identified the CAGS program as an important step in improving the situation that will ultimately benefit the children. John Mara said, "People are not often recognized in their community for the professional expertise they have. The Professional Development Center allows college and school system faculty to come together to share ideas, knowledge and examples of theory operationalism in the classroom and with colleagues. Here is an opportunity to relate research to current practice and observe results in student learning and product development. When people are recognized as experts it raises their self-esteem."

Jean Morin stated that "a shared vision allows us to cross barriers between administrators, teachers and college professors. It gives everyone an opportunity to talk about current issues and for self/staff development."

Thomas Crank affirmed his desire to share his renewed enthusiasm for teaching. "The program has given enthusiasm to veteran teachers and administrators in the system," he said.

As the teachers comments attest, participants feel a shared ownership in this program. As their sense of ownership grows, motivation and excitement about teaching correspondingly increase. The teachers feel a sense of integrity; and they feel empowered, free, and unique. Based on feedback from professionals in the field, the programs offered have been assessed by local administrator and participants to be successful.

FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

An outgrowth of the CAGS in Staff Development has been the establishment of a Professional Development Center. The Professional Development Center is an example of how colleges, public schools and the community can collaborate, systematically interface and share human and physical resources, thereby directing change and restructuring systems to expand school services and meet the needs of children, professionals and families today and in the future.

The CAGS program and the establishment of the Professional Development Center further provide a model for the delivery of graduate education and lifelong learning experiences for professional educators.

WHAT IS THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER?

The Professional Development Center is located at the McKay Campus School-Teacher Education Center-Fitchburg State College. Its purpose is to provide veteran teachers with the opportunity to participate in advanced study and to respond to professional development needs and requests of area educators, schools and systems. Through seminars, long-term networks, institutes and consultation services it supports the goals of area school systems, enhances the quality of educational services and sustains the dynamic, mutually rewarding relationship between the college and the community.

The Center includes a lending library of books, journals and audiovisual materials related to specific professional development topics and school restructuring. Lending privileges are extended to any area educator or school system at no charge.

WHO MAY USE THE CENTER?

The Center is open to all educational personnel in any role (central office staff, teachers, administrators, specialists, etc.) in public and private schools. College graduate and undergraduate faculty including adjunct staff utilize the center to initiate a professional development series or any other service in response to the needs of professional educators or area schools.

WHEN DOES THE CENTER OPERATE?

Flexible scheduling of courses, video conferences, seminars, etc. occurs throughout the school year and during the summer. Arrangements are made through the PDC Director and Graduate Assistant.

Current Professional Development Center Programs:

Whole Language Network: A group of educators with a common interest in whole language who exchange ideas and share resources. Personal and Professional support is provided through such services as newsletters, a member directory, research perspectives, sharing sessions and local conferences.

Institute for the Healing of Racism: A forum for interested educators, human service personnel and others to explore issues related to institutionalized racism on a personal and community level.

Mentoring Institute: A forum for mentor teachers and other concerned educators to explore mentoring models and practices, share ideas and resources, and enhance their proficiency in support of provisional teachers and students enrolled in full-time clinical graduate programs.

Principals' Roundtable: A forum for school administrators to share and address goals, issues and school restructuring initiatives currently being studied and implemented in public and private schools in the region.

Project CREATE: A collegial group of educators who provide support for one another as they investigate and implement effective, research-based practices in education, work toward professional and personal goals and continue to strive toward excellence in their profession.

Multicultural Network: A forum where interested educators will explore issues related to the empowerment of ethnic minority students and the integration of multicultural issues across the curriculum.

Art Educators Series: A networking of art teachers to share special programs, expertise, knowledge, resources and community services.

Early Childhood Roundtable: A quarterly gathering where educators involved with young children discuss current practices and new initiatives in early childhood education.

Central Massachusetts Science Alliance: A forum where teachers are kept abreast of current technological advances in science and discuss various science methodologies and curricular innovations. It promotes school teacher-higher education faculty interaction, science fairs, science olympiads, future astronauts, and science contests. Through this forum outstanding science faculty and students are recognized.

Central Massachusetts Writing Project: The CMWP was established to share the current research-based practices, ideas and resources of writing instruction as well as to show the connection between reading and writing. Consultation, courses and workshops are available to teachers and school systems.

Montachusett Mathematics Educators: An alliance of mathematics educators from the elementary, middle, secondary and post-secondary levels which meets regularly to share ideas and resources. Activities include workshops, speakers and round-table discussions.

The Caribbean Culture Program: A program designed to provide opportunities to learn more about issues related to the Caribbean, its culture and people. The program has facilitated campus speakers, cultural programs, study trips to the Caribbean, local issue forums and promoted activities that provide greater awareness of the Caribbean contributions to the American culture.

These Networks, Institutes, Roundtables and Series are facilitated by either college faculty or professionals in the field who have initiated dialogue about a topic. They welcome all colleagues at the college and professionals within the field to come together to study and explore actions related to the topic.

Seventeen people, seven of whom are faculty members, four superintendents, four principals, a personnel officer and an executive director serve as members of the advisory board of the Professional Development Center. This Advisory Board meets quarterly with the Director.

IN SUMMARY

In this paper we have presented the unique schooling experience of educators enrolled in the CAGS program in Staff Development at Fitchburg State College and the emergence of the Professional Development Center.

Our experience with staff development leads us to believe that we have an effective model. The CAGS provides opportunities for people in the same school system to develop knowledge, skills and teaching methodologies to work with adult learners. Our goals are tailored for each specific community. Most importantly, we have created staff development experts in the school system.

Current literature and the shared perceptions and stated needs of teachers led to the creation of the Professional Development Center. The center has tremendous strengths and a need for growth. We are indebted to college staff and educators in the field for providing us with enthusiasm, creativity and tremendous energy in our early work; and to Fitchburg State College for providing fertile grounds for professional development ideas to grow!

1992-1993 School Year

Advisory Board of the Professional Development Center:

Dr. William Strader, Director, Professional Development Center, Fitchburg State College

Dr. Michael Pregot, Superintendent, Gardner School System

Pelino A. Masciangioli, Asst. Superintendent; Leominster, MA

Paul Tresaloni, Personnel Officer, Leominster Public Schools

Burton D. Cofman, Principal, Laura A. White School, Shirley, MA

Thomas Lamey, Asst. Superintendent, Fitchburg Public Schools

Ronald Schofield, Nashoba Regional High School; Bolton, MA

Dr. Coral May Grout, Narragansett Regional School District.

Dr. Anne May, Special Education/Teacher Prep; Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA

Dr. Daniel Nomishan, ECES. Dept., Fitchburg State College Fitchburg, MA

Dr. Ronald Colbert, Principal & Associate Dean
McKay Campus School, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA

Mary Cringan, Principal; Turkey Hill Rd. School, Lunenburg, MA

Dr. Michele Moran Zide, Associate Vice President/Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education; Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA

Dr. Charles Conroy, Executive Director, The Franklin Perkins School, Lancaster, MA

Dr. Elaine Francis, Special Education Dept., Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA

Dr. Karen LaRoe, Assistant Vice Pres. for Academic Affairs, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA

Dr. Shari Stokes, Associate Professor of Special Education, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA